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Georgia Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester
Certification Program (GBPAT)



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Background

State of Georgia requires all community drinking water systems with at least 10,000 connections to have a cross connection control program in place, but smaller water systems may also be required to have cross connection control programs depending on special circumstances. Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) recommends all water systems have a cross connection control program to protect drinking water distribution systems.

The following Georgia Rules for Drinking Water are applicable to cross connection program(s) and backflow prevention assembly testing.

Georgia Rules for Drinking Water 391-3-5-.13 (4)

A water supplier shall, when requested by the Division, develop a control program for the elimination and prevention of all cross-connections. A written plan for the program shall be submitted to the Division for review and approval within two (2) years or less in accordance with a written request by the Division. When the plan is approved, the owner shall implement the program immediately.”

Georgia Rules for Drinking Water 391-3-5-.13 (6)

The supplier shall require that all backflow prevention assemblies installed pursuant to this section be field tested following installation, repair, or relocation and at least annually thereafter.”

Georgia Rules for Drinking Water 391-3-5-.13 (7)

After October 1, 2004, all required field testing shall be performed by persons who are certified in the testing of backflow prevention assemblies by the Georgia Statewide Backflow Prevention Assembly Certification Program, as approved by the Division, the American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA), the American Society of Sanitary Engineers (ASSE) or the University of Florida TREEO Center.”

The requirement for certified operator is not codified in the Georgia Safe Drinking Water Act OCGA-12-5-170. Hence, Georgia Secretary of State Professional Licensing Board which regulates other Drinking Water Professionals (Operators, Lab Analysts, and distribution system operators) does not administer the backflow prevention assembly certification program. Accordingly, Georgia EPD has contracted with Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP) to administer a certification program for Georgia Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers (GBPAT) on behalf of Georgia EPD utilizing exams provided by the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC).

This document provides the requirements to become a certified backflow prevention assembly tester in Georgia and basic guidelines under which GAWP or any other contractor chosen by EPD should follow in administering the program on behalf of EPD.

Chapter 1

Requirements for Backflow Assembly Tester Certification

1.1 Education and General Requirement

- 1.11 An education level of a High School Diploma, GED or equivalent is required for this certification.
- 1.12 Be able to carry out all duties and responsibilities associated with being a backflow prevention assembly tester.
- 1.13 Have reached the proper age requirements as needed in the jurisdiction where working.

1.2 Prerequisite Training

- 1.21 All applicants seeking the certification must take the 32-hour BPAT Certification Class from one of the GAWP approved Training Providers. Georgia Water & Wastewater Institute (GWWI) is the official GAWP training provider for this course.
- 1.22 Pre-Requisite training **does not expire** and does not need to be retaken.
- 1.23 Applicants will be required to pass a hands-on proctored exam to obtain a training certificate. The hands-on performance evaluation requires the student to properly perform the USC 10th edition test procedure on the Reduced Pressure Principle Assembly, Double Check Valve Assembly, and the Pressure Vacuum Breaker Assembly.
- 1.24 All approved training programs must follow the testing procedures of the Manual of Cross-Connection Control (10th Edition) or the most recent addition from the University of Southern California (USC) Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research. GAWP will provide the standardized hand on proctored exam forms to be used during administration of those exams. Documentation proving passing of hands-on proctored exams is to be retained by the trainer for a period of at least five (5) years.
- 1.25 Georgia also accepts equivalent training and/or certifications from three programs listed below. All individuals seeking a Georgia BPAT certification must pass the Georgia exam.

- American Society of Sanitary Engineering (ASSE), (404) 696-7121
<http://www.asse-plumbing.org/schools.asp>
- American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA), (877) 227-2127
www.abpa.org
- University of Florida Center for Training, Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (TREEO), (352) 392-9570
www.treeo.ufl.edu

1.3 Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers Certification Exam

- 1.31 Applicants are not permitted to take the exam before completion of the required GAWP Approved 32-hour course. GAWP has a contract with the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) to administer a nationally recognized BPAT exam. Exam provided by the Association of Boards of Certification will consist of 100 questions, and the candidate must score a minimum of 70% to pass.
- 1.32 Applicants that do not pass the exam will have to wait 30 days before retaking the exam.
- 1.33 Veteran's points are awarded in accordance with the Georgia Secretary of State Licensing Board.

1.4 GBPAT Certification

Upon successful passing of the exam the applicant is eligible to apply for GBPAT Certification on the GAWP website.

1.5 Reciprocity or Endorsement

Georgia EPD does not grant reciprocity to Backflow certified testers from other programs or organizations with the exception of ASSE, ABPA, and TREEO. Applicants that hold an active backflow certification with one of these programs and wish to become certified as a Georgia Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester must take the Georgia BPAT exam. Said training and/or certification must be validated and approved by GAWP before taking the exam. The individual must pass the Georgia BPAT exam and then apply for certification.

Chapter 2

Requirement for Renewal of Certification

2.1 Validity of the Certification

The Certification for Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester is valid for three years from the date of issuance.

2.2 Recertification

2.21 It is the responsibility of the tester to apply for recertification.

2.22 Each Certified Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester is required to obtain six (6) contact hours of Backflow Continuing Education courses approved by GBPAT during the 3 years the certification is active.

2.23 Continuing education training certificates must include course name, course date, course length, GBPAT Course approval number and name of Trainer.

2.3 Renewal Process

2.3.1 On Time Renewals (Certification has not expired)

- a. To renew the Certificate, the certificate holder must submit the renewal request along with the Renewal Fee and a proof of completion of six (6) contact hours of Continuing Education that are related to Backflow.
- b. The renewal request, proof of continuing education and applicable fees must be received by GAWP no later than the expiration date.
- c. Completion of Code of Ethics form is required with each renewal.

2.3.2 Late Renewals (Certification expired)

- a. A certificate holder that fails to renew the certificate before the expiration date, will have 90 days of grace period to submit the renewal request along with proof of six (6) contact hours of Continuing Education specific to Backflow. A Late Fee will be added to the renewal cost.
- b. During this 90-day grace period the certification will **NOT** be active, and the certificate holder **must cease** from testing Backflow assemblies until he/she has received the new certificate.
- c. Completion of Code of Ethics form is required with each renewal.

2.4 Failure to Renew in Timely Manner

If the certificate is not renewed by the end of the 90-day grace period, then the certificate will be revoked. A person whose certification is revoked is required to retake the Backflow Examination to get recertified.

2.5 Renewal of a Revoked Certification

A revoked Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Certification may be renewed after the penalty period has expired with permission from Georgia EPD. The individual will be required to pass the certification exam and then may reapply for a certification.

Chapter 3

Noncompliance and Disciplinary Procedures

GA EPD will be responsible for all disciplinary and non-compliance issues.

3.1 Approved Tester Lists

The first line of defense against tester non-compliance will be that all water systems required to have Cross Connection Control programs shall maintain an approved list of testers allowed to test in their jurisdiction.

3.2 Alleged Fraudulent Tester Activities

GAWP shall provide a method to report and obtain information about alleged fraudulent testing activities and a database record of these events. Water systems are responsible for providing evidence to be used during the revocation process and may need to participate in the process with Georgia EPD.

3.3 GBPAT Certification Revocation

A GBPAT certification is subject disciplinary action such as a fine, reprimand, consent order, suspension for a period of one year or revocation of the license upon submission of conclusive evidence of fraud, deceit, gross negligence or misconduct in the performance of their duties as a tester.

3.4 GBPAT Certification Revocation Appeal Process

A person may appeal a revocation, but appeal must be submitted in writing to Georgia EPD within fifteen (15) days of the revocation of the certificate. The applicant shall state the reason and all facts regarding the appeal. The administrator shall, make an inquiry of the appeal in a timely manner and give an answer in writing. A further written appeal may be made to the EPD Director. EPD Director's decision shall be final.

Chapter 4

Guidelines for Program Administrator

EPD's contracted certification program administrator GAWP will be responsible for maintaining a database of all certified testers in Georgia, scheduling the classes, assigning proctors, collection of fees, and for all communication regarding the tests and the process on behalf of EPD.

4.1 Specific Responsibilities

It is understood that GAWP will perform the following tasks to administer the Georgia Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Certification Program on behalf of Georgia EPD, and at no cost to Georgia EPD. The tasks include training, education, assistance, program administration (procedures and communication) and other implementation tasks needed by Georgia EPD. Georgia EPD remains the enforcement body for the certification program.

1. GAWP will contract with Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) to prepare, maintain and administer a Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Exam and Needs-to-Know Criteria for the Georgia program.
2. GAWP will provide a prerequisite 32-hour Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester (BPAT) Certification training class that meets the standards set forth in the following Cross Connection Control (Backflow Prevention) reference materials: Resource manuals are periodically updated; be sure you use the most current edition.
 - Manual of Cross-Connection Control (10th Edition), Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research, University of Southern California;
 - Recommended Practice for Backflow Prevention and Cross-Connection Control, American Water Works Association Manual M14; and
 - Cross-Connection Control Manual, Environmental Protection Agency EPA816-R-03-002.
3. The 32-hour BPAT Certification Training class shall include a hands-on proctored exam on these three backflow devices (Reduced Pressure Zone, Double Check, and Pressure Vacuum Breaker).
4. GAWP will maintain a lab of permanently mounted backflow devices of all three types for the purposes of hands-on training and exams. GAWP will maintain a trailer equipped with all three types of backflow devices to be used at class locations within the state of Georgia.
5. GAWP will formally approve third-party trainers to provide the prerequisite 32-hour BPAT Certification training class including approval of hands-on laboratories to be used during

the training in a similar manner to GA Secretary of State's approved trainer process for drinking water. Approval will also include an in-person audit by GAWP of the training course. Approvals will be for a period of two years. Approval numbers will be issued to approved trainers and must be included on all training certificates awarded to students.

6. GAWP will provide several continuing education training classes so that certified testers can maintain their certifications.
7. GAWP will provide live online training when necessary.
8. GAWP will provide services to all Water Systems in the State of Georgia required to have a Cross Connection Control Program. Services will include:
 - a. Communication of information pertinent to Cross Connection Control in Georgia;
 - b. Maintain a database of all Cross Connection Control program administrators for communication purposes;
 - c. Communication of training class schedules and opportunities for continuing education;
 - d. Assistance in setting up a new Cross Connection Control program;
 - e. Training classes specific to operation of a water purveyor Cross Connection Control program; and
 - f. Certified Tester searchable database of all current Georgia BPAT licensees.
9. GAWP will provide email, phone, and website services for communication with Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers. Website functionality will include:
 - a. An overview of the program including Georgia EPD Regulations on Cross Connection Control;
 - b. How to become a Certified Backflow Assembly Tester;
 - c. How to maintain your BPAT license;
 - d. Approved training providers;
 - e. Reciprocity/Endorsement information;
 - f. Backflow Exam information and registration;
 - g. Certification application; and
 - h. Answers to frequently asked questions.
10. GAWP will provide a form for reporting alleged fraudulent testing and forward those reports to Georgia EPD.
11. GAWP will provide a report of the training and testing activities performed each quarter.